

Full Circle

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Summary: When Master Chief is recovered from his cryostasis he realizes that nothing is as it was before

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`_This is just something I decided to do one night because I didn't see anything that I liked. _`

The dreams came easy to him; dreams about the past, about war, about loss, but also about hope. Many soldiers complained about how the Cryo-stasis caused bad dreams but not to him.

Not to the Spartan John-117, a.k.a. Master Chief.

The Ark was destroyed and John and Cortana managed to survive in the second half of the `_Forward __Unto__ Dawn_` when the Halo around the Ark activated. John went into the Cryochamber and ordered Cortana to wake him when he was needed.

Time passes, but to John there were only the dreams.

Cortana, left plugged into the `_Forward __Unto__ Dawn_'s` computer, was constantly broadcasting an SOS with the hope that someone would find them. It seemed like an eternity in the vast blackness of space until one day they received a message back.

Cortana was shocked at the reply, knowing that the chances of anyone finding them would have been astronomical, but started to message the ship that had pinged them.

The only strange thing was that the signal that the other ship had sent was different from standard UNSC coding but still distinctly human.

The other ship boarded and made their way to the cryochambers. Cortana was confused when they came however but her suspicions were laid to rest when the boarding party began to explain the situation.

With Cortana in tow, the group detached the chamber from the ship and transported it onto their ship and headed out for home.

John finally awoke from his dreams and didn't recognize where he was. Instinct took over and immediately set to gather his bearings. From what he could tell he was on a ship in the Infirmary area. He could also tell that he no longer had his armor on and that whoever had brought him here also had strapped him to the bed.

John counted his blessings that whoever brought him here forgot about his augmentations and easily managed to wrestle his way out of the restraints.

The door to the Infirmary slid open to him but only served to further John's confusion. The ship he was on seemed to be of UNSC design but also had the distinct look of a Covenant ship interior. Knowing that he needed to find a weapon, or even better, his armor, John found a service entry and used it to sneak through the ship to find the armory. Luck seemed to be on John's side, an attribute he had always been told was strong with him, as the layout of the ship was very similar to a UNSC ship and made finding the armory fairly easy.

Right before he entered the armory John's concerns were multiplied several times over when he saw a Hunter walk by.

"Damn," John thought to himself. "This must be a Covenant ship."

After the Hunter had passed John slipped into the armory and immediately grabbed a plasma pistol and some armor from the nearest shelf.

"I'll shoot my way out if I have to." John said quietly to himself as he slipped the armor on, questions running through his head about why armor suited for a human would be here.

As John moved around to the next row for a more powerful weapon he came face-to-face with a Grunt. The Grunt panicked and ran for the alarm but John managed to shoot the creature before it even got close. The shot however was heard much louder than any alarm and before John could leave the armory he was surrounded by not just Grunts or Hunters but, to John's confusion, Elites and Humans too hosting a number of different weapons.

The leader of the group, an Elite, shouted at John, "Drop your weapon Sir!"

John knew when he was outmatched and without his armor or any better weapons he couldn't win this battle. John tossed his weapon down to the ground and put his hands in the air. The nearest Hunter came forward and escorted John to through the ship to the bridge, at the helm stood a man in a UNSC uniform holding a data pad. John immediately saluted the man upon recognition.

"Spartan 117" John." The captain said as he looked at John. "At ease soldier," He said acknowledging John's salute.

John dropped his salute and stood at attention as the captain went on.

"I am Ship Master Brian Fortree and you are aboard my ship, the Eternal Night. You may call me Captain Fortree if you wish. I apologize for your confusion Chief but things have changed since you went into that Cryo-chamber." The Ship Master paused for a moment to think of a better way to explain things. "I think perhaps you should hear this from someone you know." The captain hit a button on the control panel next to him and Cortana materialized on a holopad next to John.

"Chief!" Cortana exclaimed. "I was wondering when you were going to wake up." Cortana smiled, "I also noticed on the ship's network that you already managed to get yourself into a bit of trouble too."

John looked at Cortana with a mix of admiration and relief. "Cortana, would you mind telling me what's going on here?"

Cortana nodded, "We've been drifting in space for a long time, decades." She said. "I've analyzed the historical databanks on the computer; you wouldn't believe what's been going on since we've been gone."

John crossed his arms in a gesture for her to get to the point.

"Anyway," Cortana continued, "After the events at the Ark the Human-Covenant War was declared over by our friend the Arbiter. There were still pockets of resistance scattered throughout Earth but they were cleaned up relatively quickly.

"The Sangheili went back to their home to set things right on their end. Even though the Prophets were gone the Jiralhanae still wanted to carry out the Prophets' will. Their war lasted for another 13 years until the Jiralhanae were all but wiped out when their home planet was glassed; since then the Sangheili have created a New Covenant."

John looked around him and asked the question that bugged him the most, "If that's true then why are there humans here too?"

Cortana nodded in anticipation of the question, "Well humanity had to go about repairing and re-colonizing what was left. The civil war in the Covenant stressed the Sangheili enough that they made economic and military agreements with the UNSC; we help them out, they help us out. In the years since the UNSC and New Covenant have grown closer and about a decade ago they banded together politically.

"Chief," Cortana said as if to summarize everything. "Humanity is part of the Covenant now."

John couldn't believe what he was hearing. "Part of the Covenant?" The question echoed again and again in his mind but he just couldn't understand it. For almost his whole life he had been fighting the Covenant and had sent countless men and women to their deaths in

fighting against them.

The room seemed to spin around him and John thought that his head would explode from that same question over and over until Cortana's voice pulled him back to reality.

"Chief?" She said. "John?"

Chief looked at Cortana with look of pure confusion and shook his head. "It's gonna take a bit of getting used to, that's for sure." He said.

At this moment the Ship Master made his presence known again by clearing his throat. "Pardon me but I'm afraid I have to intrude." John turned his attention back to the Ship Master. "Currently we're headed back to Earth for you to be debriefed and reassigned, if it is your wish to do so."

Chief's temporary look of shock was noticed by Ship Master Fortree as he continued, "I figured as much. We won't arrive there for another day or so, however I should inform you that this ship was not merely sent to just pick you up." A smile grew on the Ship Master's face, "We're also here to get you outfitted and updated on the current situation of galactic affairs."

Now it was John's turn to grin, as a soldier created for warfare he felt most at home on the battlefield. The Ship Master spoke again, "Head out to section 349D, we have a little surprise for you." At this he motioned for the guards next to Chief to escort him to the specified area.

When John arrived there he found his MJOLNIR but not as he remembered it; the armor had some major modifications to it such as better shielding, stronger alloys integrated into it, and even invisibility. A technician told Chief that the changes were complete and ready for testing. After getting into the armor he pulled out Cortana's chip and plugged it into an outlet to let her in. As Chief plugged in the chip he felt the familiar feeling that came whenever he plugged her in.

"Cortana," Chief said just for her to hear.

"Yes Chief?" She answered.

"Let's see what this new age has in store for us." He said.

And thus, Master Chief returned to war, the only real home he'd ever known, and helped to lead the New Covenant troops into battle against many foes and his dreams never drew upon despair again.

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